

Every Child Learning Every Day



November 2004

An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

Volume 3, Issue 11

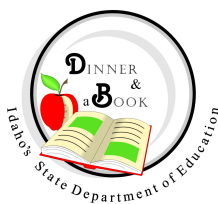
READY TO LEARN

Books review change for tots

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Pre-schoolers are challenged with many new events in their lives. Many are first-time experiences and others change over time. As adults we play significant roles in these experiences. The books below offer some useful insights.

"Now I Eat My ABC's," by Pam Abrams, photos by Bruce Wolf, 2004, Scholastic. This delectable alphabet book is a good reason to play with your food while learning the alphabet and letter sounds.



"Barfburger Baby, I was Here First," by Paula Danziger, illustrated by G. Brian Karas, 2004, Putnam. Going from being the only child to having a baby in the house is a challenge for many preschoolers. This hilarious book might help ease the jealousy and provide some giggle time too.

"Beatrice Doesn't Want To," by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Lynn Munsinger, 2004, Candlewick. Everyone can relate to Beatrice. She has a mind of her own and nothing is going to change it, except, the right story-book. A must read aloud.

"Ish," by Peter Reynolds, 2004, Candlewick. All ages. Reading this book is a perfect antidote to stifling a child's creative spirit. The title "Ish" is a brilliant choice for this wonderful lesson on the power of words.

Dr. Stan Steiner, is the chairman of the Boise State University's Department of Literacy. He can be reached at (208) 426-3962 or via email at ssteine@boisestate.edu.

Arts important to preschoolers, too

Dear Reader:

This month, we're pleased to showcase a new contributor to this newsletter — Jennifer Williams, Idaho's 2002 Teacher of the Year.

Jennifer is an award winning art teacher, who retired after more than 30 years working in classrooms.

We've asked Jennifer to write about nurturing creativity in preschoolers and offer some fun activities to teach the foundations of art skills.

Why even talk about art and preschoolers? The humanities, which includes art, are important in Idaho schools. We have standards for humanities that stretch from preschool to high school.

Idaho is one of few states that require students to earn credits in the humanities in order to graduate from high school.



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Beyond the academic requirements, we need only to picture our lives without the humanities to recognize their importance. Imagine a world

without music, art, dance, novels, movies or television, and so on. These activities go beyond entertaining us. They often help us express our feelings and find meaning in a chaotic existence.

The humanities help fuel our imagination and creative natures, which is essential if we expect our children grow up to become problem solvers and thoughtful individuals. And, anyone who has watched a toddler with finger paints knows it's fun, too.

So the foundation of art skills (or reading, or math, or science, ...) begins in the preschool years with simple things: lines, colors, shapes, and the tools to create.

I'm looking forward to Jennifer's column. You will find it each month on the back page. Let us know what you think.

READY TO LEARN

When talking about books don't forget the spaces

Adults sometimes forget that children have to learn the most basic things that make up written language, such as the spaces that separate words.

The words of English text run from left to right and top to bottom. At the end of a line, the sentence continues until a period tells where one sentence ends and the next one starts.

You can help your child learn about how print works in many ways.

When you are reading to your child, you can look at the book cover and read the title and the author's name.

You can sometimes run your finger along the print so that your child can see that print goes from left to right.

When you need to take a break from reading, such as answering a question, you can point out that there are stops built into the print in the book.



You can say, "Let me finish this sentence before I answer that question." Then point to the period when you get there. "There, that's the end of the sentence. Okay, let's answer your question."

This helps children learn one part of how print works—that there are parts to it, such as sentences, paragraphs, and chapters, and that the end of a line or a page isn't necessarily the end of the meaning in a sentence.

Article adapted from "Starting Out Right, A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success." Available from the National Academy Press.

Preschool politics?

November is a great time for these preschool titles.

"Duck for President," By Doreen Cronin Do you think things would be better if you were in charge? Duck thinks he can do a better job than Farmer Brown, but once in power he soon tires of the duties and responsibilities of leadership. So he decides maybe he's better off writing his autobiography.

"Max for President!" by Jarrett Krosoczka It's election time, and both Max and Kelly are running for class president. They busily make campaign signs and buttons and develop their platform. There can only be one winner, though, so someone is bound to be disappointed. All ends well, though, in this satisfying and recognizable story.



RESOURCES

Family reading week set for Nov. 14-20

Idaho's eighth annual Family Reading Week, November 14 - 20, is sponsored by the Idaho State Library's Read to Me program and supported by Gov. and Mrs. Kempthorne, Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Marilyn Howard, the Lee Pesky Learning Center, and Idaho Public Television.

The theme for this year's week is "Get a Jumpstart on Reading @ Your Library."

The National Research Council recommends that children enter school with early literacy skills that serve as the foundation for learning to read and write.

Children who enter school with more of these skills are better able to benefit from the reading instruction they receive when they arrive at school.

Narrative Skills.

Tell stories together, encourage pretend play, and let your child be a storyteller.

Letter Knowledge.

Help your child identify the first letter in his name and find it on street signs.

Print Awareness.

Help your child discover how to hold a book and turn the pages.

Vocabulary. Teach your child the specific names of things, like vegetables at the grocery store

Print Motivation. Find books that match your child's interests and share them often.

Phonological Awareness

Sing songs, play games and share rhymes to help your child play with the sounds in words. Check out the Read to Me web site, www.lili.org/read/readtome/.



NUTRITION

Child care centers win nutrition awards

The State Department of Education awarded certificates of merit to 19 Idaho child care centers for outstanding nutrition efforts.

Centers recognized consistently meet federal meal requirements including serving milk with each meal, providing nutritional lessons, and meeting standards.

Programs honored include: Eastern Idaho Head Start, Idaho Falls; Family Services Alliance, Pocatello; After School Adventures Inc., Pocatello;



Tender Loving Care Child Care, Pocatello; Little People's Academy Inc., Idaho Falls; Apple Tree Learning Center, Rexburg; Early Learning Center, Idaho State University, Pocatello; Small World Training Learning and Care Center, Inc. Idaho Falls; Boys and Girls Club of Magic Valley, Twin Falls; Step Ahead Learning Center, Twin Falls; College of Southern Idaho Child Care Center, Twin Falls; North Idaho College Head Start, Coeur d'Alene; Early Head Start, Coeur d'Alene; Lewis-Clark Early Childhood

Head Start, Lewiston; North Idaho College Children's Center, Lewiston; Child Care Solutions, Boise; St. Alphonsus Early Learning Center, Boise; Friends of Children and Families Head Start, Boise; Mountain Home Air Force Base Youth Center, Mountain Home. Four programs also received outstanding menu award. Those awardees include: Family Services Alliance, Pocatello; Small World Training, Learning & Care Center Inc., Idaho Falls; Western Idaho Community Action Center—Head Start, Payette; Lewis-Clark Early Childhood Head Start.

READY TO LEARN

Take time to talk with your children

Talking with your child is one of the best ways to help your child get ready for school.

Birth to 1 year: Talk about what you or your baby is doing when playing. Use short sentences and words. Take turns. Your baby may make sounds, wiggle and wave her arms to respond to your words, or to "ask" you to repeat something. She might turn away when she's tired of the game or talking.

1-3 years: Use short sentences and familiar words. Play with farm animals and buildings and talk about what you are doing. "I'm making a fence for my horse and cow. I need this piece and this piece. 'Mooooo,' my cow likes her new corral."

3-5 years: Make an experiment! Use cups, water, and food coloring. Talk about what you are doing. "First I'll fill these cups. Second I will add food coloring. I wonder what will happen when I pour blue into yellow water? What color do you think will come out?" "I need something to stir with. A spoon is for stirring," "a towel is for cleaning," etc.

Skills needed for kindergarten: Explain what he or she is doing when playing or making something. Use new words to go with the activity.

Books and other resources: "There Was An Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." By Simms Tabak.

ARTS

Art begins with opportunity and access

By Jennifer Williams
2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

One thing I discovered in raising my four children is that creativity and creative development is nurtured in an environment that is rich with color and opportunity. My children were fortunate because as an art educator, I have always kept a plethora of materials spread through my home. But parents don't have to be an artists or teachers to foster creativity and provide opportunity to their children.

All of us began our art experiences by using line to scribble. At 1 to 2 years of age art usually begin through interaction between the child and his environment.

These young children can begin with one of the basics elements of art: "line." At this stage, the child's physical development allows very little control and his mental development usually doesn't allow him to retain a mental image to draw. Instead, this stage is marked by the joy in discovering that certain utensils or tools (pencils, markers, lipstick and even baby food plums) can create something

visual. Sometimes, the child discovers it on a wall with a crayon or on a high chair with a marker. Safety is important as often the tools we used end up in their mouths or down the front of a diaper.

Help your child discover "line" by providing them access to safe and age appropriate tools crayons, markers, pencils, sticks, food, and so on. It will be some time before a child will be able to control his effort and draw recognizable shapes and he should not be expected to do so. Parents need to praise their child's efforts. As a child grows older it may be necessary to set boundaries and rules. For example, you may not want coloring on walls. In setting those rules make sure your child has a place he can color.

Keeping the environment rich with tools and materials to explore is the very first step in helping a child to develop his cognitive powers. One of my very favorite sayings was on a coaster at the Red Robin restaurant and is interesting advice: Never use a marker for lipstick!